Numb. 121

The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

——Similis tibi, Cynthia, vel tibi cujus
Turbavit nitidos extinctus paſſer ocellos. Juv.

From *Saturday January* 14. to *Tueſday January* 17. 1709.

From my own Apartment, January 16.

I Was recollecting the Remainder of my Viſion, when my Maid came to me, and told me, There was a Gentlewoman below who ſeemed to be in great Trouble, and preſſed very much to ſee me. When it lay in my Power to remove the Diſtreſs of an unhappy Perſon, I thought I ſhould very ill employ my Time in attending Matters of Speculation, and therefore deſir'd the Lady would walk in. When ſhe entered, I ſaw her Eyes full of Tears. However, her Grief was not ſo great as to make her omit Rules, for ſhe was very long and exact in her Civilities, which gave me Time to view and conſider her. Her Clothes were very rich, but tarniſhed; and her Words very fine, but ill applied. Theſe Diſtinctions made me without Heſitation (tho' I had never ſeen her before) ask her, If her Lady had any Commands for me? She then began to weep afreſh, and with many broken Sighs told me, That their Family was in very great Affliction.—— I beſeeched her to compoſe her ſelf, for that I might poſſibly be capable of aſſiſting them. She then caſt her Eye upon my little Dog, and was again tranſported with too much Paſſion to proceed; but with much ado, ſhe at laſt gave me to underſtand, That *Cupid*, her Lady's Lap-dog, was dangerouſly ill, and in ſo bad a Condition, that her Lady neither ſaw Company, or went abroad, for which Reaſon ſhe did not come her ſelf to conſult me. That as I had mentioned with great Affection my own Dog, (Here ſhe courteſied, and looking firſt at the Cur, and then on me, ſaid, indeed I had Reaſon, for he was very pretty) her Lady ſent to me rather than to any other Doctor, and hoped I would not laugh at her Sorrow, but ſend her any Advice. I muſt confeſs, I had ſome Indignation to find my ſelf treated like ſomething below a Farrier; yet well knowing, that the beſt, as well as moſt tender, Way of dealing with a Woman, is to fall in with her Humours, and by that means to let her ſee the Abſurdity of them, I proceeded accordingly. Pray, Madam, (ſaid I) can you give me any Methodical Account of this Illneſs, and how *Cupid* was firſt taken? Sir, (ſaid ſhe) we have a little ignorant Country Girl who is kept to tend him: She was recommended to our Family by one that my Lady never ſaw but once at a Viſit; and you know, Perſons of Quality are always inclined to Strangers; for I could have helped her to a Couſin of my own. But —— good Madam, (ſaid I) you neglect the Account of the Sick Body, while you are complaining of this Girl: No, no, Sir, ſaid ſhe, begging your Pardon: But it is the general Fault of Phyſicians, they are ſo in haſte, that they never hear out the Caſe. I ſay, this ſilly Girl, after waſhing *Cupid*, let him ſtand half an Hour in the Window without his Collar' where he catched Cold, and in an Hour after began to bark very hoarſe. He had however a pretty good Night, and we hoped the Danger was over; but for theſe Two Nights laſt paſt, neither he nor my Lady have ſlept a Wink. Has he (ſaid I) taken any Thing? No (ſaid ſhe); but my Lady ſays, he ſhall take any Thing you preſcribe, provided you do not make uſe of Jeſuits Powder, or the Cold Bath. Poor *Cupid* (continued ſhe) has always been Phyſical; and as he lies under ſomething like a Chin-Cough, we are afraid it will end in a Conſumption. I then asked her, If ſhe had brought any of his Water to ſhow me? Upon this ſhe ſtar'd me in the Face, and ſaid, I am afraid, Mr. *Bickerſtaff*, you are not ſerious; but if you have any Receipt that is proper on this Occaſion, pray let us have it, for my Miſtreſs is not to be comforted. Upon this I pauſed a little, without returning any Anſwer; and after ſome ſhort Silence, I proceeded in the following Manner: I have conſidered the Nature of the Diſtemper, and the Conſtitution of the Patient, and by the beſt Obſervation that I can make on both, I think it is ſafeſt to put him into a Courſe of Kitchen Phyſick. In the mean Time, to remove his Hoarſeneſs, it will be the moſt natural Way to make *Cupid* his own Druggiſt; for which Reaſon I ſhall preſcribe to him, Three Mornings ſucceſſively, as much Powder as will lie on a Groat, of that noble Remedy which the Apothecaries call *Album Græcum*. Upon hearing this Advice, the young Woman ſmiled, as if ſhe knew how ridiculous an Errand ſhe had been employed in; and indeed I found by the Sequel of her Diſcourſe, that ſhe was an arch Baggage, and of a Character that is frequent enough in Perſons of her Employment, who are ſo uſed to conform themſelves in every thing to the Humours and Paſſions of their Miſtreſſes, that they ſacrifice Superiority of Senſe to Superiority of Condition, and are inſenſibly betrayed into the Paſſions and Prejudices of thoſe whom they ſerve, without giving themſelves Leave to conſider that they are extravagant and ridiculous. However, I thought it very natural, when her Eyes were thus open, to ſee her give a new Turn to her Diſcourſe, and from ſympathizing with her Miſtreſs in her Follies, fall a railing at her. You cannot imagine, (ſaid ſhe) Mr. *Bickerſtaff*, what a Life ſhe makes us lead for the Sake of this little ugly Cur: If he dies, we are the moſt unhappy Family in Town. She chanced to loſe a Parrot laſt Year, which, to tell you truly, brought me into her Service; for ſhe turn'd off her Woman upon it, who had lived with her

Ten

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